

Message Text

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14

ACTION EB-07

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 DODE-00 DOTE-00

FMC-02 INR-07 NSAE-00 CG-00 OFA-01 DLOS-04 LAB-04

SIL-01 AID-05 CEA-01 FRB-01 CIEP-02 SP-02 STR-04

TRSE-00 SAM-01 OMB-01 PA-02 USIA-15 PRS-01 AGR-10

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R 291540Z AUG 75

FM AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4802

INFO AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMCONSUL ANTWERP

UNCLAS BRUSSELS 7725

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EWWT, BE

SUBJECT: BARGE STRIKE/BLOCKADE OF BELGIAN INLAND WATERWAYS CONTINUE

REF THE HAGUE 4358

1. AS REPORTED REFTEL SYMPATHY BLOCKADE OF PORT OF ANTWERP HAS BEEN LIFTED FOLLOWING END OF STRIKE IN NETHERLANDS. HOWEVER, INLAND WATERWAYS IN BELGIUM REMAIN BLOCKADED FOLLOWING REJECTION BY BARGE OWNERS OF AGREEMENT ON REVISION OF SHIPPING RATES PROPOSED BY BELGIAN BUSINESS FEDRRATION (FEB). BARGE OWNERS WHO ARE REPRESENTED BY INDEPENDENT CARTEL (NOT CONNECTED WITH NATIONAL LABOR CENTERS), REPORTEDLY VOTED OVER 90 PERCENT AGAINST THIS AGREEMENT AUGUST 27. BLOCKADE REPORTEDLY HAS SINCE BEEN REINFORCED AND EXTENDED TO SECONDARY WATERWAYS.

2. ACTING MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (MINISTER OF INSTITUTIONAL REFORM VANDERKERKHOVE) ATTEMPTING MEDIATE DISPUTE. MINISTRY OF UNCLASSIFIED

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COMMUNICATIONS ISSUED COMMUNIQUE AUGUST 28 CALLING FOR RENEWAL

OF NEGOTIATIONS ONCE BLOCKADE HAS BEEN LIFTED FOLLOWING
EXAMPLE IN NETHERLANDS. SO FAR, BARGE OWNERS HAVE SHOWN NO
INCLINATION ACCEPT THIS PROPOSAL.

3. COMMENT: WHILE INTERNATIONAL SHIPPING NOT CURRENTLY
AFFECTED, MUCH OF BELGIAN COMMERCE MOVES BY INLAND WATERWAYS AND
PROLONGED STRIKE COULD HAVE SERIOUS EFFECTS ON BELGIAN ECONOMY.
BELIEVE BELGIAN GOVERNMENT WILL ACT QUICKLY TO END THIS DISPUTE
PARTICULARLY NOW THAT BLOCKADE HAS ENDED IN NETHERLANDS.
RENNER

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NNN

Message Attributes

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06 JUL 2006

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